



PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FEDERAL JURY FINDS MESA FELON GUILTY OF POSSESSION OF NUMEROUS FIREARMS INCLUDING 5 MACHINEGUNS

PHOENIX, ARIZONA -- Paul K. Charlton, United States Attorney for the District of Arizona, and Virginia T. O'Brien, Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Phoenix Field Division, announced today that ROBERT WILSON STEWART, 62, of Mesa, Arizona, was found guilty today of five counts of Unlawful Possession of Machineguns in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(o) and one count of Felon in Possession of a Firearm in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1), by a federal jury at Phoenix, Arizona.

The evidence at trial showed that Stewart has a 1994 felony conviction for the unlawful possession of a Sten machinegun in Federal District Court, District of Utah. On June 16, 2000, special agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms executed a federal search warrant at Stewart's residence in Mesa, Arizona. In the course of the search, the special agents found 5 sten machineguns, loaded 9mm machinegun magazines and additional sten machinegun parts in a detached garage. The special agents also found a total of 26 additional firearms including a loaded handgun in Stewart's car and a loaded 12 gauge shotgun with a drum magazine near the front door of the detached garage where the five machineguns had been found.

The case was tried before United States District Court Judge Roslyn O. Silver. Trial commenced on Tuesday, January 15, 2002 and ended today. Judge Silver ordered Stewart be taken into custody pending

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sentencing in this case. Judge Silver set a hearing regarding Stewart's continued detention for Friday, February 1, 2002, at 9:00 a.m.

Each conviction for Unlawful Possession of a Machinegun, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(o), and Felon in Possession of a Firearm, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1), carries a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment, a \$250,000.00 fine or both.

The investigation leading to the guilty verdicts was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms with assistance from the Mesa, Arizona, Police Department.

Sentencing is set before Judge Silver on April 8, 2002, at 10:00 a.m.

The prosecution is being handled by Frederick A. Battista, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-00-698-PHX-ROS
RELEASE NUMBER: 2002-013

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